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## Editor's Notebook

In the spring of 1995, scholars from a wide range of social science and humanities disciplines met to discuss the "value of rural America." At that workshop, experts in demography, economics, geography, history, landscape architecture, literature, planning, political science, resource economics, rural policy, and rural and urban sociology grappled with the question: "Why do people value rural areas?" The discussion was lively and fascinating. Ideas led to other ideas. Answers led to more questions. This special issue of *Rural Development Perspectives* is an attempt to capture part of that discussion. The issue does not articulate a rationale for rural policy or rural investment. It does, however, provide some guidance for rural policy. For as John Logan, an urban sociologist, put it, "...what we value in rural America sets the agenda for public policy" about rural America.

The editor gratefully acknowledges the work and contributions of all the workshop participants and authors: Calvin Beale, demographer in ERS; Ken Deavers, former Acting Administrator of ERS; David Danbom, Professor of History at North Dakota State University; Glenn Fuguitt, Professor Emeritus of Rural Sociology at the University of Wisconsin; Herbert Gottfried, Professor of Landscape Architecture at Cornell University; William Howarth, Professor of English at Princeton University; John Logan, Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Albany; Dick Long, Acting Director of the Rural Economy Division of ERS; Bob Lovan, former Director of the National Rural Development Partnership; Terry Marsden, Professor of Planning at the University of Wales; Katherine Smith, Director of the Commercial Agriculture Division of ERS; and Karl Stauber, former USDA Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics. Special thanks go to David L. Brown, Professor and Chair of the Department of Rural Sociology at Cornell University.

Thomas D. Rowley